## Contents

*List of Tables and Figures*  
*Preface*  

1. Exploring Gender and Development  
2. Women and Development in Africa  
3. Models and Methods  
4. The Land Tenure Rights of African Women  
5. Constraints and Opportunities in the World of Work  
6. The Marriage Market  
7. Bargaining Power at Home  
8. Preferring Sons over Daughters  
9. The Gendering of Education  
10. Getting Capital to Women  
11. Emerging Movement For—and Against—Gender Equality

*References*  
*Index*  
*About the Book*
This business of womanhood is a heavy burden. . . . How could it not be? Aren’t we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can’t just decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated! When there are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy; you have to start learning them early, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on. Easy! As if it is ever easy. And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa!

—Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

I always knew I was a businesswoman. When I was in high school, I used to sell illegal sweets. And I made money. I made a lot of money . . . I am very happy and proud. When I was young, they said: A woman is a woman—a man should take care of you. But women are actually contributing a lot more than men. We always find ourselves multitasking.

—Lovin Kobusingya, Uganda, 2012

Alizèta Ouédraogo is widely considered to be the richest woman in Burkina Faso, a small, landlocked country of 15 million people in West Africa. Burkina Faso is an oasis of slow and steady economic growth in war-torn West Africa, though the country is one of the poorest in the world. People eke out a living of less than $500 per year growing crops, such as sorghum, millet, and cotton, and raising livestock. Burkina Faso is in the Sahel zone of Africa, just south of the Sahara Desert, which also favors transhumant livestock production of sheep, cows, and camels. Herders move from place to place with their herds, earning their livelihoods by selling milk, and by occasionally selling livestock for meat and hides. For al-
most 25 years, Alizèta Ouédraogo had a monopoly on tanning hides in Burkina Faso. Her company, Tan-Aliz, grew steadily, eventually selling $10 million per year in hides to Italian luxury goods producers such as Gucci. Ouédraogo diversified into real estate development and infrastructure construction. That her daughter married the younger brother of President Blaise Compaoré, who has ruled from 1987 to the present, may have helped her obtain government procurement contracts. In 2011, she was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce of Burkina Faso. She succeeded Oumarou Kanazoé, Burkina Faso’s richest man, who had passed away the previous year. Alizèta Ouédraogo became the face of business for Burkina Faso.

The success of Alizèta, as she is known in Burkina, has not been free of controversy. Tanning hides is a notoriously toxic industry, with lax oversight of disposal of chemicals used to treat the hides and other toxic wastes. Alizèta’s tanning factory, on the outskirts of Ouagadougou, has been the object of frequent protests. Workers at the factory have periodically gone on strike, claiming that the factory does not follow worker health, safety, compensation, and employment practice regulations. The press has hinted that her government-granted monopoly on tanning hides was not motivated by sound economic policy to temporarily protect an infant industry from regional competition, but rather so that her family (and hence the president’s) could benefit economically. Her construction company, according to rumors, benefited from a hasty and secretive privatization of a state-owned company.

For some, Alizèta Ouédraogo’s rise, and the growth of her companies, encapsulate many of the controversies of African economic development: crony capitalism, corruption, environmental degradation, and disregard for workers. For others, her story is the shining example of the liberal way: self-made industrial powerhouse, capitalist with a human face (she is a well-known philanthropist and sponsors numerous charities), responsible citizen (being president of the Chamber of Commerce means she spends much time away from her business and represents one important sector of civil society). For still others, she represents a gender victory: a woman who succeeds and operates on equal terms with men.

Whatever the evaluation of Alizèta Ouédraogo, the issues raised are central to development. First, development is about investment. The actors of development are the individuals who foster investment. Young people want to grow up in a society with expanding opportunities for realizing their ambitions and utilizing their talents. Opportunities expand when individuals, as owners of companies and directors of organizations, undertake to forego consumption today and make investments for the future. Societies differ in terms of how their social institutions encourage investment. In many African countries, illegitimate and unrepresentative government,
powerful oligopolies, and mafia-like private militias and gangs thwart the
best efforts of farmers, artisans, traders and small businesses, investors, and
entrepreneurs. People and institutions use the power of the state, or some-
times private violence, for their own advantage. These “grabbing hands”
are especially difficult to control in poor developing countries. A hard part
of development studies is determining whether people like Alizèta Ouéd-
raogo, and the social institutions she represents, are more like entrepre-
neurs or more like gangsters (Fisman and Miguel, 2009).

Second, the development process balances benefits to current genera-
tions with costs to future generations. Most development is toxic to hu-
mans, to plants, and to animals. A parking lot enables humans to travel con-
veniently using automobiles, but nothing grows under asphalt, water rushes
off and carries away leaking oil, and the heat of the sun is added to the at-
mosphere, thus warming our planet. A factory that tans sheep, goat, and
cow hides is a parking lot on steroids. It is proper for public policy to regu-
late these negative externalities.

Third, development may depend on using state policy to resolve certain
well-understood problems with market economies, notably the tendencies
of private investors to hesitate when many of the benefits of their invest-
ments spill over to others. That is, investment should be subsidized and
guided by social institutions when there are significant positive comple-
mentarities. Granting a temporary monopoly of exporting hides to Tan-Aliz
may not be a sign of corruption, but rather an indicator of good economic
policy.

Finally, and of particular importance for this book, development is a
process that erodes social institutions of exclusion. The shackles of status
are replaced by a new conception of persons as equal citizens under the
law. Development is about expanding freedom and ending discriminatory
institutions that restrict the freedom of some to realize their ambitions and
talents (Nussbaum, 2001). Alizèta Ouédraogo, as a successful female entre-
preneur in a society where women’s roles remain sharply defined and cir-
circumscribed, has to be considered in this light.

Organization of the Book
This book gives the reader the tools to understand the context and relevance
of women in African economic development. Not just wealthy and politi-
cally connected entrepreneurs like Alizèta Ouédraogo, but also poor women
who eke out a living hawking bananas on street corners. This introductory
chapter defines some key terms—development, gender, gender equality—
that are used throughout the book. The focus of the book will be on Africa
south of the Sahara Desert, which means that the Mediterranean and Middle
Eastern–oriented countries of Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco
are excluded. Henceforth, *sub-Saharan Africa* shall be shortened to just plain *Africa*, in accordance with common usage in the social sciences. Africa remains home to the poorest countries of the world, and social institutions that affect economic and development outcomes are profoundly gendered. The primary aim of this book is to trace the links among development, economic activity, growth, and gendered institutions.

The approach adopted throughout emphasizes the feedback loops between the choices that individuals make and the social environment that structures those choices. Men and women make differing choices. These choices in turn constitute part of the gendering of economic activity. But the motivation for those choices is in part the differing opportunities that men and women experience. The structure of an economy—rights over property and persons, organization of market transfers of property and persons, and rules regarding nonmarket transfers of rights—is itself gendered. There is a pithy saying that economics is all about how people make choices, while sociology is all about how people do not actually have any choices to make. There is no need to reduce the social sciences to such gross stereotypes, but the saying does capture the essence of how to think about the feedback-style relationship between structure and agency.

If Africans were rich, the analysis of the economic dimensions of gender would be less urgent. Unfortunately, African countries are the poorest of the world. Chapter 2 offers a broad overview of the problem of poor economic growth performance in Africa and tempers that assessment with more encouraging news of steady and sometimes dramatic improvement in many indicators of well-being, such as infant mortality and schooling attainment. The chapter introduces multiple regression analysis, a key tool of statistical analysis. The technique of multiple regression analysis is applied to examine correlates of economic growth, across the world and among African countries. Attempts to explain variation in development trajectories across countries reveal a major challenge: there can be little confidence that an estimated relationship constitutes a causal relationship. Regression analysis of country-level data suffers from the problem of endogeneity, where the outcomes to be explained are themselves explaining or causing other variables.

The endogeneity problem has increasingly led social scientists to turn to experimental methods to try to measure the importance of gender in shaping economic outcomes. Chapter 3 introduces the method of randomized control trials (RCTs). The chapter reviews a number of representative studies using RCTs. Subsequent chapters note RCTs designed to address specific gender questions.

Chapters 4–6 describe three structures that are deeply gendered in rural Africa: land tenure, labor allocation, and marriage markets. The system of land tenure (Chapter 4) is a basic structure of an agrarian economy. Tenure
rules determine the allocation of rights to use and transfer land. Most African societies give women far fewer land-use rights than are given to men. Labor allocation is discussed in Chapter 5, which provides evidence of the gendering of labor markets, principally in the form of norms that enforce patterns of time allocation and occupational segregation by gender. Rural women typically have limited rights to choose how much time to spend on tasks of their choosing; they may be subordinate to the instructions of their husbands or fathers. Moreover, many African societies classify certain activities as “male” and others as “female.” In the past, it was rare for men or women to cross those occupational boundaries, but those boundaries are eroding rapidly as economies urbanize and diversify. Chapter 6 investigates marriage markets, which in many African societies are major economic structures determining the economic possibilities of women. Marriage traditions are constantly being reinvented and reinterpreted, but the marriage institutions of most social groups and countries remain lopsided in favor of men.

Subsequent chapters look at important choices that men and women make in the context of the structures that they find themselves in as they enter adulthood. Chapter 7 discusses the organization of households. In rural Africa, many significant economic choices concerning production are made in the context of households. The vast majority of people in Africa do not work in factories or for large organizations. They work with other members of their household. The structure of household production is constituted by the choices made by household members. Chapter 8 focuses on one important household choice, investments in the health of children, while Chapter 9 reviews the economics of household investment in educating children. If investment choices in health and education are themselves gendered, then right away there is a feedback mechanism between structure and choice. Parents make different investments in girls than they do in boys, which affect the skills, outlooks, and opportunities that girls take with them into adulthood. Because of this, young women will make choices that are different from those of young men. People view the social patterns that emerge from these choices as part of the economic structure of their society, which in turn shapes the choices of the next generation.

Over the past two decades, microfinance has come to be known as the single most important gendered development program promoted by governments and nonprofit organizations. Microfinance organizations tout their effects on women and claim that microfinance may have dramatic effects in reducing poverty. Chapter 10 addresses some of the many issues surrounding microfinance and shows how evaluations of impact suggest that the effects may be quite modest.

Chapter 11 concludes the book with reflections on the gendering of politics in African societies. Political structures are enormously influential
in determining economic structures. African governments are increasingly mandating greater representation in political structures. It remains an open question whether these initiatives have large positive effects, and whether they will lead to more equal gender representation.

**Defining Development**

*Development* is a catchall word that refers to the process by which societies increase the possibilities that people have to realize their potential (Sen, 1999). A society develops when it expands the range of possibilities for people to be fulfilled. Children survive the many life-threatening illnesses of infancy and childhood. They spend their childhood learning, in nurturing educational settings, and enter adulthood with the capabilities and freedom to choose how to realize their potential.

A developed society reduces poverty, so that people are less frequently faced with a lack of effective choices. People in a developed society seldom confront discrimination and social norms that curtail their choices. Humans, as social creatures, realize their potential when they are increasingly free to engage in the life of their community, however defined. Development is economic, political, and cultural, and is a process through which freedom in these domains is enhanced. Of course, development is relative. Most people, even those living in poor countries today, would curl their lips in distaste if they were confronted with the living conditions and lack of basic freedoms for people in the most developed societies of 1700.

This gloss of development perhaps conceals the many controversies of development. For example, one corollary of development is degradation of the environment. As stewards of the planet, human aspirations for sustainability are often in conflict with aspirations for development. A related point is that development is a process of change, and persons who value tradition often find their sense of identity and well-being threatened by development. Development also often involves growing inequality in access to power. There is much to be learned from the radical critique of development (Escobar, 2011). This critique holds that the language and rhetoric of development obfuscate and mystify in order to forestall questioning of relations of power and oppression that exist around the world. At the risk of sounding blithe, however, this is not the place for an extended commentary on the controversies and rhetoric of development. Development involves many processes and many choices; there is a universe of ambiguity, nuance, and complexity to be explored (Watts, 1993). This book will be a lengthy treatment of just one aspect of development, the gender dimension, where the development process changes some things for the better and others for the worse.

Africa at the beginning of the twenty-first century remains the least developed region of the world, in this sense of offering people possibilities to
realize their potential. Proportionally more infants and children die in Africa than elsewhere. Children who survive are malnourished and have limited opportunities to go to school. African economies offer few opportunities for fulfilling and rewarding work. African societies shackle marginal groups with oppressive and degrading stereotypes. African political systems, though changing rapidly, deny many people essential freedoms.

That Africa alone occupies the bottom rung of the development ladder is a recent phenomenon. Thirty years ago, Africans had plenty of company at the bottom. Most of the world’s poor, in fact, lived in China, India, and Bangladesh. But these countries have seen amazing growth in income per capita for several decades now. Hundreds of millions of people who were living on less than $1 a day in 1980 are now earning ten times that amount. The poor in these countries have also experienced significant improvements in living standards that have outpaced their increases in income. Many of these societies have also seen considerable improvements in freedoms to participate in cultural and political life. Unfortunately, most African countries have only seen growth in income since the early 2000s. Income declined or was stagnant for the previous twenty-five years. Moreover, recent African growth has been due to oil and mineral extraction, without sizable spillover benefits for the bulk of the poor. A recent wave of democratization has not been accompanied by deep changes in respect for human rights and opportunities for civic engagement. Africa has seen economic growth without much development.

Growth in income, also commonly known as economic growth, is a key component, though by no means the only component, of development. Income growth is measured using statistics on national economic activity. Virtually all countries of the world regularly calculate the value of goods and services produced in the country in a year, known as gross domestic product (GDP). Most also report gross national income (GNI), which measures how much of domestic and foreign GDP accrues over a year as income generated by nationals of a country. GDP is increasingly diverging from GNI. Many Africans earn very high incomes when they are abroad, and much income produced in Africa takes the form of mineral and oil extraction by multinationals. Since a significant share of income earned abroad is remitted, and since much income earned by multinationals is repatriated, GNI might be a more suitable measure of well-being. GDP might, however, still be a good indicator of the future or potential earnings of Africans born in their countries. Another measure that might be considered is net national product, which subtracts the considerable depreciation of capital and infrastructure from the total product produced in a year. If depletion of natural resource assets were also subtracted from total production, by the argument that sales of existing assets are not really “goods produced,” then incomes would be lower (Winter-Nelson, 1995).
An issue arises when valuing GDP or GNI in a common currency such as the US dollar. To compare incomes earned in different countries, the local cash value of production and incomes measured in local currencies must be converted into a common currency. There are two main alternatives. The first is to use current market exchange rates. The second is to use purchasing power parity (PPP) exchange rates. Many economists favor the PPP rates. These are constructed by taking samples of the prices of goods and services that are purchased in most countries and calculating the exchange rate that would equalize the prices of a basket of these goods with the prices in the United States. Suppose it costs $10 in the United States to purchase a given amount of food and the same amount costs 20 rupees in India. It makes sense then to use a ratio of 2 rupees per dollar when comparing people’s incomes. The problem with market exchange rates is that they need not equalize purchasing power. Large deviations from purchasing power parity occur and persist, and market exchange rates often exhibit dramatic swings from one year to the next. Because of these swings, if market exchange rates were used to compare incomes in common currencies, then incomes also would appear subject to large swings. But income does not exhibit such large swings when measured in national currencies, so neither should it when using a common currency.

PPP rates are not necessarily superior when it comes to comparing African incomes with those of wealthy, industrial countries. When PPP rates are used, African countries appear to have higher incomes. This is because many goods and services produced in African economies are labor-intensive and not traded internationally (such as housing, haircuts, guard services, and food processing). Wage rates in African countries are extremely low, sometimes amounting to no more than US$0.25 per day in rural areas (using market exchange rates). Therefore, services are very, very cheap. When these services are priced at the same price as in industrial countries, they appear more valuable, and income appears higher.

Table 1.1 presents the average rates of growth of GDP per capita for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The table ranks African countries by their GNI per capita in 2011, converted to US dollars by the World Bank’s Atlas method, which is an exchange rate constructed as an index of recent averages of market exchange rates and inflation rates. The table also shows GDP per capita converted into US dollars using PPP rates. The PPP figures are about twice as high as the GNI levels. Differences are partly due to differences in PPP and Atlas methods, and partly due to the conceptual differences between GNI and GDP discussed earlier. The final columns show the population of each country and the cumulative percentage of all the population of Africa living in countries with lower average income than the income of that country. Thus, about 50 percent of the population in Africa in 2011 lived in countries with average GNI per capita lower than US$800 per year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Democratic Republic of</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>–0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>–0.11</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>1,171</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,167</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>–0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>1,047</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>1,671</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>2,244</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>2,025</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>1,475</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>1,692</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>2,335</td>
<td>–0.02</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,894</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>1,764</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Republic of</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>3,814</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>2,860</td>
<td>4,522</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabo Verde</td>
<td>3,830</td>
<td>4,245</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>4,580</td>
<td>5,262</td>
<td>–0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>5,610</td>
<td>6,520</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>7,610</td>
<td>9,860</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>7,650</td>
<td>14,109</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>8,570</td>
<td>13,056</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>10,040</td>
<td>13,811</td>
<td>–0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>12,260</td>
<td>23,416</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>13,560</td>
<td>26,057</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: The growth rates are calculated as regression coefficients against a time variable. Data are not available for Somalia, São Tomé and Principe, and Djibouti, nor is GDP per capita using purchasing power parity exchange rates available for Zimbabwe.
Figure 1.1 shows the evolution of a weighted average of per capita GDP levels for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The GDP levels are weighted by population in each year. The solid black line, which displays very little variation, is this weighted average. For comparative purposes, the growth rates of India, China, and Malaysia are also presented. The populations of India and China each exceed that of the sum of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Malaysia has been a star performer and is an example of the likely “upper bound” to economic growth. The graph covers the period

1960–2011. African countries in 2011 were very far from the income levels of the rest of the world. They were even further from the income levels of rich countries, approximately US$40,000 per capita. Such gross inequality is an urgent problem.

The table and figure make clear that growth performance in Africa was very bad until the late 1990s. Almost half of African countries experienced negative growth during the period 1975–1999. Indeed, most of the population of African countries had lower income in 1999 than in 1970. Only nine countries experienced growth over 2 percent per year during the 1975–1999 period, and, of these, three were small island nations (Cape Verde, Seychelles, and Mauritius) and another two were the small countries of Swaziland and Lesotho, entirely surrounded by South Africa. Uganda’s and Eritrea’s growth were recoveries from years of civil war—no small feat, but incomes remain dismally low. Equatorial Guinea’s growth has been due entirely to the recent discovery and exporting of offshore oil. The president and his family control the wealth. Even Botswana’s steady and rapid growth over the decades has been fueled by the diamond-mining sector and has slowed considerably, in part because of the HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus infection/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) epidemic. The slow and often negative growth of the “lost 25 years” from 1975–1999 was especially serious because of the low levels of income that African countries had at independence. Income levels have barely budged and thus remain extremely low compared with the rest of the world.

The upturn in growth since 2000 is very evident in the table and less evident in the figure (since a large percentage increase from a very small base is not very large compared to the income levels of Malaysia and China). The steady growth in Africa was not halted by the global economic recession of 2008–2010. There is considerable optimism about African economic growth at the time of this writing. Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 1.1, compared with growth in GDP per capita for India, China, and Malaysia, African countries remain woefully behind. Even continued high growth rates for decades will not enable them to converge with other developing countries.

Some societies with low GDP per capita levels have very high levels of human development. They have good childhood nutrition and low mortality, high education levels, meaningful work, adequate standards of living, and equal access to primary and basic health care. Unfortunately, the evidence that African populations are disadvantaged on all dimensions, from GDP to malnutrition, comes through plainly in national statistics, field studies, and qualitative fieldwork. The Human Development Report, for example, published annually by the UN Development Programme, compiles many statistics indicative of the quality of life beyond the income measures of GDP and GNI (Klugman, 2011). The report calculates a Human Devel-
Development Index (HDI) that aggregates a number of indicators. African countries are at the bottom of the HDI, and virtually all of the bottom twenty countries are in Africa. Six of these indicators of well-being are plotted in Figure 1.2, for African countries averaged together, and again for India and China. There are many gaps in individual country coverage of these measures of well-being, so the average African performance reflects also an underlying variation in which countries reported in which years. Nevertheless, the trends are clear and robust to different ways of aggregating the African data. African countries as a whole have been improving at close to the same rate as India and China, but they remain stubbornly less well-off. Mortality of infants and children remains high. The death rate is almost 100 per 1,000 for infants and 150 per 1,000 for children under five in the bottom half of the group of African countries, and not much better even in the well-off countries.

For schooling, primary completion and secondary enrollment are growing but are still far below the levels of India and China (which has 100 percent primary enrollment). Many children in Africa still lack opportunities to attend school simply because there is no school available. Moreover, the quality of education, essential to full participation in a world of “knowledge workers,” is vastly lower in African countries. Total fertility rate, defined by the World Bank as “the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age-specific fertility rates,” is an important indicator of the choices women have to pursue other opportunities besides child rearing. In all societies of the world, fertility rates fall as economies grow and development happens. Fertility rates in African countries have been falling, but remain much higher than those of India and China. Life expectancy in Africa has only recently begun to rise from the plateau of fifty years that resulted when rising deaths due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic cancelled improvements in life expectancy due to advances in public health infrastructure.

For measuring development, income and physical well-being may not necessarily be the only measures or the best measures. Human flourishing may be more about mastering dance moves than listening to music on $200 headphones. Perhaps Africans do not value material possessions and instead spend time talking with neighbors and enjoying the arts. Perhaps some other measure of satisfaction or happiness would reveal Africa to be less poorly off. There is little evidence to buttress this viewpoint. Deaton (2010, p. 244) analyzed data from the Gallup World Poll of 2006 and concluded that the map of life satisfaction measures “looks similar to an income plot of the world: North America, Europe, Japan, Australasia, and Saudi Arabia are happy as well as rich, and the really unhappy places on the planet are in sub-Saharan Africa, plus Haiti and Cambodia.”
Figure 1.2 Indicators of Well-Being, 1975–2011
(unweighted average of available African countries)

Defining Gender

Gender refers to a set of shared and evolving discursive habits that prescribe and proscribe behavior for persons in their social roles as men and women and that structure analysis and decisionmaking about the actions of others. These discursive habits may be invoked deliberately or they may emerge, unintended, from processes operating in the brains of people. In this sense, all societies of the world are known to be gendered. Gender is mental baggage, carried wherever one goes. Gender matters for practically everything people do; it is hard to think of any social or even individual action where gender might not be an important consideration in understanding action.

The habits of gender include characterizations, inferences, expectations, and decision algorithms. The habits guide people when they think about how other people might react to proposed action. The habits are cognitive realizations that are habitual. People do not reconstruct gender from scratch as they ponder and evaluate a situation. Habitual, but not static; gender does change and evolve. Actions that take place in social settings, under the gaze of others, update gendered discursive habits. Gender shapes actions and is shaped by reasoned judgment about the actions of others; when habits and reasoned evaluation conflict, persons might experience cognitive dissonance, which generates a mental impetus to change habits.

Shared discursive habits of gender overlap with discursive practices related to other important discursive constructs (ethnicity, religion, nationality). Ambiguity, contradiction, and conflict emerge across different categories of social construct. When at war, should a woman butcher an enemy soldier with her bayonet and shout in triumphant bloodlust?

Gender in the social sciences is different from the biological categories of male and female. Biology typically focuses on how hormones such as testosterone affect physical and neurological processes (Udry, 1994). There is little doubt that hormones do affect neurological processes of cognition (Sapienza, Zingales, and Maestripieri, 2009; Zethraeus et al., 2009). But cognitive processes are so complex that it is unclear whether there is, at present, much to make of findings that simple, single-issue cognitive processes—such as solving a maze or choosing between $10 now and next week—are affected by hormones. Someday the accumulation of findings may offer useful insights into the underlying brain chemistry of gender and large-scale social patterns related to gender; at present they do not.

Sociobiology maps biological differences onto behavior, arguing that biological differences create different incentives for specialization and other behavioral arrangements as humans coexist in groups. In general, the discursive habits discussed in this book are many steps removed from the basic practices and discursive habits of small hunter-gatherer societies that sociobiology might explain. Sociobiology argues that patterns and institu-
tions that emerged in prehistory strongly persist into the present. But it has little to offer in terms of explaining how present-day institutions affect economic outcomes. For that, there is little need to understand the deep origins of gendered structures. The enormous variety and constant change of gender constructs around the world suggest that the only relevant fact to be explained by sociobiology is why virtually all agrarian and nonindustrial societies have been, persistently, patriarchal. But if present trends, and science fiction writers, are reasonable guides, it seems very likely that another thousand years will see many nonpatriarchal societies flourishing. Sociobiology may not have much to contribute if it devotes attention solely to explaining male dominance.

While the biological division of humans into male and female accounts for much human behavior, there is more variance in the “sex” spectrum, and the complexity of hormone interactions means there is considerable room for more complex ranges of outcomes. Male and female do not completely capture the panoply of biological possibilities among humans, and male and female involve different biological characteristics over each individual life cycle (Kennelly, Merz, and Lorber, 2001). These issues are beyond the scope of this book.

Gender is instantiated in the social structures that shape choices that individuals make. Social structures include legal rules, norms of behavior, ongoing institutions and hierarchies, patterns of competition in different markets, persisting prices of goods and services, shared expectations about the future, and mechanisms for nonmarket transfers of property, services, and resources. Structures fix the space of feasible action that persons might take. Gender becomes incorporated into and may be propagated by structures that take the forms of defined and named social institutions. The obstacles to changing institutions may be so overwhelming that people devote little attention to thinking about gender as a changeable discursive habit pertaining to the institution. The institution makes the habit automatic, and the institution is inhabited by people who are charged to, and given incentives to, reinforce the habits supported by the institution. The Catholic Church, for example, preached sharp distinctions for appropriate behavior for men and women. As an exemplar of these distinctions, the church forbade women from becoming priests and celebrating mass. Few people over the centuries have thought that expressing their discontent, or leaving the church, would change the institution in their lifetime. The gender strictures advocated by the church persisted and became viewed as natural and immutable. Similar discursive habits are made concrete by other religious institutions and systems of thought.

Structures bound opportunities in a relational way. Each individual in a society occupies a different position in relation to a structure. Sometimes those positions are unique to each individual, as when a person contem-
plates who in his or her circle of friends might help in a time of need. In other settings, the relational spaces are common: all women are excluded from the priesthood in the Catholic Church. Sen (1981), in stressing the role of market structures in perpetrating famines, introduced the notion of structures as shaping the entitlement mappings of individuals. Food entitlements, how much food a person or family might command, determine whether someone lives or dies. More broadly, entitlements, opportunities, budget constraints, and feasible actions are all different terms for expressing how people might reasonably consider their actions to be constrained.

The models that people construct to make sense of the world are themselves structures, if they are widely shared. If many people share the same model of how the economy or society works, then their behavior will be patterned in predictable ways. If everyone thinks the Catholic Church does not allow women into the priesthood, then no women apply, no male priests challenge the system, and the pope devotes little time to the issue. The structure persists, and people’s models are confirmed. If everyone thinks the price of gasoline will be similar to what it was yesterday, then no one changes their purchasing and supplying behavior to any large degree, and the price indeed turns out to be the same.

In evolutionary biology, structure consists of the set of evolutionarily stable strategies, or modes of behavior. Because some genes are encoded to respond to social stimuli in certain ways, genes that are similarly encoded may do better than other kinds of genes. This is one way of thinking about the persistence of altruistic and social behavior in many species, including humans.

Political processes are the metastructures of society. Political actions are often geared toward changing structures through deliberation, and political institutions are the structures that shape how structures can be changed in this way. Political structures are also about the way violence is controlled; this is of paramount importance in many African societies, as so many swing from periods of horrific violence to periods of relative calm with low-intensity violence in the background. Moreover, violence against women, whether condoned or ignored by the polity, forms an important backdrop to gender structures (Green, 1999).

Sometimes structures shape choices by bundling rights, obligations, contingencies, and commodities. Choices that respect the bundling are treated as legitimate by other actors in society, while choices that unbundle the package are considered illegitimate. Sexual acts, for example, are often bundled with rights and obligations to care for children.

It is not always easy to identify precisely what constitutes a social structure in any given society. The forms of structures vary. In some cases, structures are monolithic entities, institutionalized, codified, and crystal clear. In other cases, multiple structures exist and people choose and negotiate among structures to secure their own advantage. For many African so-
cieties, structures are not written down. Regimes and rules are orally transmitted across generations and social groups, through recitation and collective memory. This is why “elders” are often so important in many African societies. Their expertise, derived from experience, makes them repositories of structure.

Measuring Gender Inequality

Few would dispute the assertion that the discursive habits of gender and the gendered social structures that exist in most societies favor men over women. This generalization holds for African countries and many other countries around the world, over much of history. Philosophers from antiquity in all major world traditions have remarked upon gender inequality. Folktales passed on through many oral cultures embed inequality in normative presentations of social relations.

Gendered norms and institutions that are lopsided mean that women and girls are disadvantaged in life relative to men and boys. There are no debates over urgent problems of too many female presidents, too few male mathematicians, too many ethnic groups where women own all the land, too few men’s bathrooms in parliament, too many male victims of domestic violence, or too many women using household money for drink. The pervasiveness of female disadvantage is a commonplace and poorly understood feature of economic life.

There are people who believe that comparing the well-being of boys and girls, or men and women, is like comparing papayas and lemons. One is sweet and the other sour, and the difference does not imply unequal welfare. Men and boys have their lives to lead and girls and women theirs. Nevertheless, girls and women in Africa face unequal chances for education, less inheritance and ownership of assets, discrimination in employment and occupations, violence at home and in public spaces, and limited political representation. These add up to unambiguously diminished welfare and capacity to fulfill life aspirations. The situation is more like comparing a rotten papaya with a lustrous lemon.

Coverture

Self-ownership is a basic structure of social life. In societies with slavery, self-ownership is obviously highly unequal. Self-ownership refers to whether a person owns her or his body and has control over her or his actions. Is a person an inferior entity in the social order, a legal minor? When women do not own themselves, the structure of self-ownership clearly trumps any other structures of social life for women. Societies around the world have systematically and extensively denied to women the right of self-ownership. Many African societies in the past have treated women as
legal minors unable to make independent decisions. Some continue to deny to women full rights of personhood.

In the United States, the legal system whereby married women were considered to be minors was called *coverture* (after the French, *femme couverte*) and was in place in many states of the union until the early twentieth century. Hymowitz and Weissman (1978, p. 23) described the system as follows:

Under coverture married women had no property and no money of their own. Even a married woman’s clothing and household goods belonged to her husband. A married woman’s dowry and any inheritance she might receive also belonged to him. In most instances he could sell her property without her consent. Nor did a married woman control her own wages. She could work all day as a servant, and her husband was legally free to take her earnings and allow her to starve. A married woman could not buy or sell anything without her husband’s permission. She could not make contracts, sue in court, or be sued.

A significant economic effect of coverture is likely to be the disincentive for women to carry out any extra effort at improving their livelihoods, if their husbands get to appropriate all of the benefit. Women are not the “residual claimants” of their efforts. A woman who wants to become an entrepreneur will think twice. Her husband will have first rights to all of her profits.

There is no comprehensive data set measuring self-ownership by gender across countries. Yet, there is much evidence from anthropologists suggesting that coverture has been the norm in customary law for many African societies. Lack of control over self has been most evident in cases of forced marriage and bridewealth used to purchase a wife. There has been much discussion in anthropology as to whether societies with bridewealth ought to be thought of as having men purchase rights over women. That is the case for some, but not all, societies with bridewealth. Gray (1960, p. 36) summarized the evidence from a good number of societies of Central Africa: “Certain defined rights in a woman are regularly sold and purchased for a price, and therefore it is not absurd to consider her as property.” Gray’s interpretation was consonant with other contemporary reports. Colson quoted a woman as saying: “When we were young there was no argument. If a woman told her parents that her husband beat her, her mother would say, ‘you stay or we will beat you: we have already . . . accepted bridewealth for him. It is for you to return to him’” (1958, p. 183, cited on p. 119 of Chanock, 1985). As one male informant speaking about the colonial era in Tanzania put it to Lovett: “Once bridewealth was given for a woman, she was like a slave. She had no freedom because she could say nothing” (1996, p. 61).

Even in Ghana, with matrilineal societies that gave women consider-
ably more rights and privileges than many other societies, women were offered up as “pawns” for loans between men (Austin, 1993). The uncle or guardian of a woman would give her to a creditor as a kind of collateral. The creditor then had rights over the woman much as he might have rights over a piece of property. Sometimes the creditor could be her very own husband, lending money to the uncle (of his wife). In those cases, according to Grier’s (1992, p. 311) reading of the available historical record, a man was said to have “bought” his wife. The evidence suggested to Grier that during the World War I cocoa boom it was very common for men to obtain land for plantations by pawning female relatives. Girls were reduced to the status of indentured servants.

Women could apparently buy themselves out of these sale marriages and indentureships. Gray’s own analysis of Sonjo bridewealth practices suggested as much:

In most respects a broken betrothal is dealt with by the Sonjo in the same manner as a divorce. If a young man does not wish to marry his fiancée he sends her a broken twig, which signifies his decision. The girl is then free to accept another suitor, who has only to pay the fiancé the original bride-price in order to marry the girl. The girl herself can also break the engagement if she can find an alternative suitor who is willing to pay back the bride-price. If the fiancé finds another man who is willing to buy his marriage rights, the girl is obliged to accept the change unless she can find someone more to her liking before the time set for marriage. Whoever finally marries the girl must make the regular payment of ten goats to her father before the marriage, and must also pay a fee of seven goats to the village council, which is customary at every divorce and remarriage. (1960, pp. 41–42)

Cornwall (2001) offered a particularly poignant tale from southwestern Nigeria:

Iya Safuratu was initially engaged to a man who turned out to be a thief. She needed a way to repay her dowry and had no means of her own. A wealthy man, an associate of her brother, approached her parents, who gladly accepted him as a husband for her. He repaid her dowry and they were married. He married a string of wives, but gave them nothing at all to feed themselves or their children. Each wife used her own business to keep her hearthhold going. Iya Safuratu struggled to make ends meet. But she endured. At first she was the youngest of four wives, but her husband went on to marry another seven. She stuck it out. It was only when he told her one day that from then onward his latest wife would be doing everything that Iya Safuratu had been doing on the farm she decided she had to go. She went back to her parents and started trading, saving small amounts of money. And the day came, finally, when she could go to court and repay her dowry. All these years later, she proudly showed me a receipt dated 1963. (p. 76)

There is evidence that forced marriage and household servitude have
remained common. In Coastal Kenya, women in Mijikenda communities were not allowed to visit their natal families (Ciekawy, 1999). Hodgson (1996) offered a fascinating case study of a Maasai woman who resisted the authority of her biological father. The woman had been raised by her mother and stepfather since infancy. When she went to marry the man of her choosing, her father announced that he had already accepted bridewealth from a friend. Maasai elders concurred and obliged the woman to break her current engagement. She fought her elders and took her case to the national court system. A judge reprimanded the elders, who continued to insist that the woman did not have the right to choose her marriage partner. Another Maasai woman, Agnes Siyiankoi, also made headlines in the late 1990s for taking her husband to court for beating her. When asked why she had agreed to marry the man who had beaten her for more than a decade, Siyiankoi responded that her father would have cursed her if she had not done as he willed (Mwangi, 1997). These examples illustrate how a young woman becomes convinced that her marriage will be enforced against her will. She must either remain in the marriage or suffer physical punishment. Perhaps, over the years, she will resign herself to her situation, or rationalize it, and may in the end even participate in the same violent punishment of other young women who try to test the enforceability of these marriages.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII)

When analyzing gender inequality, economists often focus on a variety of outcomes that are indicative of gender differences in well-being or quality of life. Table 1.2 presents five of these indicators of well-being for African countries. The indicators are used by the authors of the Human Development Report to calculate a Gender Inequality Index (GII). The higher the GII, the worse is gender equality. The GII is explained as follows: “The index shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements in these dimensions. It ranges from 0, which indicates that women and men fare equally, to 1, which indicates that women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions.” The data in Table 1.2 come from the Human Development Report of 2013, which in turn compiles data from a variety of sources. (Some of the data are from years earlier than 2010, but all indicators are quite recent.)

The first indicator, adolescent fertility, is the equivalent of teen pregnancy. One perhaps thinks that a young woman, in order to realize her potential, should not have a baby too early in life. Especially if, as shall be seen, responsibility for raising children is not shared equally between mother and father but rather often falls on the mother alone. African countries still have very high rates of teenagers having children. About one in
ten young women will have a child before age nineteen. A related indicator is maternal mortality. Women in Africa very frequently die in childbirth. This high mortality is likely a correlate of broader gender inequality because maternal mortality is preventable at relatively low social cost through an effective delivery of basic antenatal and postnatal care (Liljestrand,

Table 1.2 Various Indicators of Status of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Adolescent Fertility Rate (births per 1,000 women, aged 15−19)</th>
<th>Maternal Mortality Ratio (deaths of women per 100,000 live births)</th>
<th>Labor Force Participation Rate (female/male ratio)</th>
<th>Population with at Least Secondary Education (female/male ratio)</th>
<th>Percentage Female in Parliament</th>
<th>HDR Gender Inequality Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Tomé and Príncipe</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Republic of Congo</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
The fact that so many women die is a signal of misplaced and gendered public health priorities.

Another indicator of inequality is labor-force participation. Strong norms in many societies proscribe women from working outside the home. Sociologists and anthropologists have often observed that women working together in factory situations outside the home develop and exercise more power when they return to their household in the evening. Men everywhere seem to resist this empowerment. African countries have relatively low female labor-force participation.

Secondary and tertiary (university) school attainment is highly gendered around the world, though the gender gap has been falling rapidly (Sundstrom, 2004). Labor-force participation is not closely correlated with secondary school attainment in Africa, because so many people work in agriculture. However, education is correlated with high adolescent fertility, and the ratio of female to male secondary schooling is generally less than .50 for countries with high gender inequality indices and high fertility.

One final measure included in the GII is the ratio of females to males in national parliaments. Many countries in Africa now have explicit gender quo-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.2 continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Human Development Report (2013). According to the HDR, “the Gender Inequality Index relies on data from major publicly available databases, including the maternal mortality ratio from the United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Group (MMEIG), the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank; adolescent fertility rates from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ World Population Prospects; educational attainment statistics from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics educational attainment tables and the Barro-Lee data sets; parliamentary representation from the International Parliamentary Union; and labour market participation from the International Labour Organization’s Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), 7th Edition.”

Note: Data are missing for selected variables for some countries.

1999; Winikoff, 1991). The fact that so many women die is a signal of misplaced and gendered public health priorities.
tmas for parliamentary representation. Even so, the representation of women in parliaments is far from equal. The average ratio across countries is .24; there are four times as many men as women in the average parliament.

The table presents the countries sorted according to the level of adolescent fertility, which has a correlation of .78 with the gender inequality index. Adolescent fertility is a good first indicator of gender inequality. The sorting makes clear that southern African countries, along with the Great Lakes countries of Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, have low GII scores, and thus relatively more gender equality. Three Sahelian countries (Chad, Niger, and Mali) and the Democratic Republic of Congo have very high GII scores (in the .70 range), indicating much gender inequality.

Respect for Women’s Rights in Law and Practice

Another indicator of gender inequality was compiled by Cingranelli and Richards (2010), who codified adherence by countries to a variety of human, civic, economic, and social rights, for all countries of the world. Their database includes several measures of women’s rights. These are averaged across African, Asian, and Latin American countries over the period 1980–2010. The trends for the three regions are presented in Figure 1.3. Women’s Economic Rights codifies on a scale from 0 to 3 whether the government, in law and practice, enforced a set of ten basic rights for women in the workforce (e.g., women have the right to work at night, in the police, free from sexual harassment). Women’s Political Rights codifies on a scale from 0 to 3 whether the government, in law and practice, enforced five basic rights for women in politics (e.g., right to vote, run for office, join political parties). Women’s Social Rights codifies on a scale from 0 to 3 whether the government, in law and practice, enforced a set of twelve basic rights for women in a variety of social roles (e.g., right to obtain a passport, equal inheritance, freedom from forced sterilization).

Figure 1.3 includes, as a point of comparison with these women’s rights, Cingranelli and Richards’s Empowerment Rights Index, which is “an additive index constructed from the Foreign Movement, Domestic Movement, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Assembly & Association, Workers’ Rights, Electoral Self-Determination, and Freedom of Religion indicators.” The index has a range from 0, indicating no government respect for the rights, to 14, indicating full government respect. The index does not take into account gender differences in these rights.

Figure 1.3 shows that African countries were somewhat more gender unequal than Asia and Latin America. All three regions were quite unequal, with low scores for the three indicators of rights. There were improvements over time in women’s political rights, but not in economic and social rights. General human rights irrespective of gender, as captured in the Empowerment Rights Index, were much higher in Latin America than in Asia or
Figure 1.3 Indicators of Women’s Rights, 1980–2010

Source: Cingranelli and Richards (2010).
Africa, though there appeared to be deterioration rather than improvement in all three regions.

There have been a number of other efforts to capture these kinds of indicators (Crotty, 2009; Htun and Weldon, 2011). The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), available at genderindex.org, is based on the Gender, Institutions, and Development Database of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The SIGI aggregates a number of measures of institutional discrimination.

**Adherence to International Treaties**

Another measure of gender equality can be constructed by examining commitment to the international treaty known as the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other treaties that bind states to promote women’s equal rights. CEDAW sets standards for women’s rights in the political, cultural, economic, social, and family sectors, and calls for action to redress and arrest many forms of gender discrimination. Furthermore, the convention calls for specific actions to remedy discrimination. The UN General Assembly adopted CEDAW on December 18, 1979, and the convention entered into force on September 3, 1981, after it had been ratified by twenty states. During the following twenty-five years, virtually all states of the world ratified the treaty. The last states to ratify the convention, other than small island states, were Afghanistan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Swaziland, and São Tomé and Príncipe in 2003 and 2004, Oman and Brunei in 2006, and Qatar in 2009. The only major countries not having ratified the treaty by 2013 were Iran, Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, and the United States. South Sudan of course only recently became an independent country, and Somalia lacked an effective state, leaving the United States, Iran, and Sudan as the only countries deliberately not ratifying the treaty.

There are three ways that ratification of an international treaty such as CEDAW directly impacts domestic practice of gender relations. First, CEDAW calls for changes in national constitutions when these are in contradiction to the treaty. Second, CEDAW calls for enactment of legislative and executive policies to bring the countries’ laws into conformity with the treaty. Third, the judicial system in a country might reinterpret previous law in the light of the treaty commitment.

Two examples give a sense of the mixed effects of treaty ratification. In 1990, the Tanzanian High Court invalidated customary law that prevented women from inheriting clan land from their fathers (Coldham, 1991). The case was summarized nicely by the International Labour Office (2002):

Holaria Pastory brought a court challenge to the Haya customary law that prevented her from selling clan land. She had inherited land from her father, through his will, but when she tried to sell it her nephew applied to have the
sale voided. Tanzania’s Declaration of Customary Law clearly prohibited her sale of the land in s. 20 of its rules of inheritance. Pastory argued that this constraint on women’s property rights violated the Constitution. The court was faced with the difficulty of interpreting a constitutional guarantee of freedom from discrimination that did not make any specific reference to women. The court relied on the fact that the Tanzanian Government had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as other international treaties and covenants, to find that women were constitutionally protected from discrimination. The court stated that “the principles enunciated in the above named documents are a standard below which any civilised nation will be ashamed to fall.” The High Court decided that the rules of inheritance in the Declaration of Customary Law were unconstitutional and contravened the international conventions which Tanzania had ratified. Thus, the rights and restrictions around the sale of clan land are the same for women and men.

An example from Zambia, however, illustrates the limited scope of CEDAW alone to effect change. A gender activist, Sara Longwe, sued the Lusaka InterContinental Hotel (Tamale, 2001). The hotel had a policy that unaccompanied women were not allowed onto the premises. The motive was to discourage prostitution. Longwe, however, saw the policy as being discriminatory: an unaccompanied woman was presumed guilty and denied entry into a “public space.” Longwe won the case, with the justices citing CEDAW in their decision. Unfortunately, the Longwe case seems not to have been precedent-setting, for a new Lusaka High Court judge dismissed a similar case brought by Elizabeth Mwanza in 1997. She, too, was evicted from a hotel for being unaccompanied by a man.

Ratification of CEDAW by a state is not a sufficient measure of the commitment of a state to the evolving gender rights regime. CEDAW is somewhat remarkable because so many ratifiers entered strong reservations to their ratification. The “quality” of ratification has been quite different for different countries, perhaps more so than any other human rights treaty. Many predominantly Muslim countries ratified the treaty subject to major reservations that essentially rendered the treaty meaningless. Article 28 of the convention states that reservations may be made at the time of ratification or accession, although reservations that are incompatible with the convention are supposedly prohibited. About one-third of the countries that have ratified the convention have done so with reservations to one or more of the articles. Half of the states entering reservations submitted technical or symbolic reservations (some states reserved the right to continue male privilege in the exercise of royal and chiefly power). The other half of states entering reservations were excepting themselves from important substantive obligations of the treaty. A report prepared by the UN-CEDAW secretariat was scathing regarding many of the reservations of the predominantly Mus-
lim states that constituted most of the states entering serious reservations (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1996).

A cursory examination of the reservations of many of these states suggests that they are, perhaps, incompatible with the object and purpose of the convention. Kuwait reserved the right to continue to exclude women from voting. Saudi Arabia ratified the treaty in 2000, but subject to a general reservation that is worth quoting in full: “In case of contradiction between any term of the Convention and the norms of Islamic law, the Kingdom is not under obligation to observe the contradictory terms of the Convention.” Egypt’s reservation to article 16 on equality in marriage was that marriage law that ensured rough equality in outcomes was compatible with the convention, even though the treatment was unequal by gender (Jenefsky, 1991). The wife receives a payment upon divorce, the husband does not. Therefore, divorce could be harder to obtain for the wife than for the husband. Egypt also opted out of articles 2, 9, and 29.

Figure 1.4 plots, for various regions and countries, the change over time in an indicator measure of commitment to the international women’s rights regime. The data cover the period 1960–2003 (by then, all African countries except Sudan and Somalia had ratified CEDAW). The indicator takes into account the quality of ratification of CEDAW and is higher for states ratifying without reservations, low for states with reservations that basically state the country will not actually be bound by any provision of the treaty that conflicts with existing domestic law, and intermediate for states with specific but substantive reservations. The more reservations, the lower the strength of ratification. The indicator variable also takes into account compliance with the reporting provisions of the treaty by coding completion of the regular reports that members of the treaty are required to submit to the UN-CEDAW committee. Finally, the commitment indicator is extended backward in time by coding earlier women’s rights treaties (only ratification is coded for these). CEDAW consolidated a smaller women’s rights regime that consisted of the Convention of the Nationality of Married Women, the Convention on Consent and Marriage Minimum Age, and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women. These conventions were opened for ratification during the 1950s and 1960s.

For comparative purposes, another indicator of commitment to general human rights treaties is also constructed, by simply adding up instances of ratification over time for each country of ratification of nine treaties and protocols. The treaties are as follows: International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) and its two optional protocols; International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR); Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or De-
grading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its two optional protocols.

Figure 1.4 shows that African countries did not differ substantially from South Asia and the Middle East in ratification of general human rights treaties. For women’s rights, Africa has ratified earlier and more often and with fewer reservations than Middle Eastern and Asian countries. Within Africa, however, there was considerable variation. Sudan, for example, barely adhered to the earlier international regime of women’s rights treaties, while ratifying almost all general human rights treaties and protocols. Ghana and Malawi, meanwhile, were just about average in their ratification and commitment to treaties.

Conclusion
A successful businesswoman like Alizèta Ouédraogo exemplifies the messy and ultimately ambiguous evaluation of the development process. Every
person, process, and action in the development process has a particular context and relationship to others. In order to reason more clearly about the development process, it is necessary to define concepts and measure aggregates that capture those concepts. This chapter has introduced some of the standard concepts and measures of development and gender. Subsequent chapters use these definitions and measures to set the context for more detailed exploration of specific aspects of gender in African economies.